2: Bowers E-5 (1930-1931)1950 NQ17 Mandan NQ17

served as interpreter, was exceedingly helpful in planning the study of the ceremonies. Resistance to the divulging of sacred lore was anticipated. He indicated those who would be least likely to co-operate. Work was begun with Christianized informants. Before recording a ceremony, additional information on the household not brought out in recording the census was obtained. Employing genealogies based on household groups, it

FIG. 3.—Dance of the Goose Society

was possible in nearly every instance to determine both the former villages at Fort Clark and the older villages near Heart River of which the older people of the households were descendants. This information was important in determining cultural differences between the old villages.

The writer used fourteen informants for this study; eleven of these were Mandan and three were Hidatsa of the Awaxawi band. The six Mandan male informants were White Calf, Crows Heart, Ben Benson, Bear on the Flat, Foolish Woman, and Little Owl. The female informants were Scattercorn, Mrs. Good Bear, Calf Woman, Mrs. Owen Baker, and Front Woman. Wolf Chief and Mrs. White Duck supplied information on the Okipa and Corn ceremonies that had reached them through intermar-

2: Bowers E-5 (1930-1931)1950 NQ17 Mandan NQ17

utilize other decorations, she was obliged to seek another woman entitled to make the particular decoration and buy the right of her.

There was a similar specialization for men. When a young man was found to have an especially good voice which was heard above the others in the songs of the society dances, he was encouraged to buy singer rights in dances of both a sacred and a secular character. Although they were obliged to make payments either to existing singers or to the owners of bundles, their rewards far exceeded the initial costs. Their training included information relative to the ceremonies that were being performed, and they received recognition comparable to that shown those who had directed a number of successful war expeditions. In council, their authority was as great as those who had directed war parties, summer buffalo hunts, or eagle-trapping expeditions.

Those who could tattoo or paint designs appreciated by the people of the village were highly regarded and received a considerable amount of goods for their services. There were usually at least two skilled painters in each village, and they were expected to belong to opposite moieties. A man of one moiety would go to a man of the other moiety to have a robe, shield, or clothing painted either according to his particular inclination or with specific designs of things dreamed of. Each warrior had one or more shields made of buffalo hide taken from around the neck, and these were used universally by the Mandan for protection against arrows and spears until guns became more universal. The designs were believed to offer supernatural protection, and their potency was considered to be enhanced when the design was painted by a man of the opposite moiety, since there would be a payment to the "father" who would pray for the "son's" success. These painters were held responsible for the proper painting of the characters represented in the Okipa and received much property for their services. If they were otherwise sensible men, they enjoyed the same status as those who had been successful in other pursuits.

The arrowmakers were highly regarded. Although all males usually made arrows, some were employed specially for arrow-making. These were the older men of the lodge who had passed

2: Bowers E-5 (1930-1931)1950 NQ17 Mandan NQ17

worn like an apron. He wore the hair shed from a buffalo over his head and carried Lone Man's pipe and pemmican balls, which he placed on the ground in front of the drummers. Then he walked to the south side of the sacred cedar and stood on the buffalo skull he had previously placed there. Grasping the wooden planks inclosing the cedar with both hands and pressing his forehead against the wood, he asked Lone Man to hear him and send the people all they asked for, to bring the buffaloes near the villages, and to keep all bad luck away.

At the completion of the Okipa Maker's prayer and while he stood grasping the wooden inclosure, the drummers and rattlers began singing; this was the signal for the fasters to come out. They were dressed in their robes with the hair side out and hooked at each other in imitation of a herd of buffaloes as they danced toward the sacred cedar in a double line,[19] one line going to the east of the sacred cedar, the other to the west side. There they formed a straight line on the south side and danced forward and backward in front of the Okipa Maker, who continued his weeping, addressing the first Lone Man to help the people. When the drummers changed the song to one with a rapid tempo, the fasters and the Okipa Maker returned to the Okipa lodge, imitating a herd of buffaloes as they entered the lodge following the Okipa Maker.

The drummers, Okipa Maker, and fasters came out to dance four times the first day, and the procedure was the same on each occasion. They came out at sunrise, before noon, at mid-afternoon, and just before sunset.

Just before dark, after dancing outside had finished for the day, women brought willow firewood to the Okipa lodge, where it was placed in two piles on each side of the door. Women of the WaxikEna-Tamisik moiety placed theirs on the west side, while the other clans placed theirs on the east side. Male representatives of the two divisions of the tribe carried in the wood for the fire, since women were not permitted inside the lodge. The small boys and many of the young men left the Okipa lodge at the end of the first day, usually leaving from thirty to fifty fasters who intended to remain the entire four days without

19. Each half represented one of the moieties. The fasters were also symbolic of the animals held captive in Dog Den.

2: Bowers E-5 (1930-1931)1950 NQ17 Mandan NQ17

the other. The people gave him robes, for he symbolized the first Lone Man who went through the village each morning at sunrise attending to the needs of all his people.

Those painting the Bull Dancers worked all morning and did not finish until noon.[22] The two men with buffalo-hide rattles came out and took their places. The Okipa Maker came out

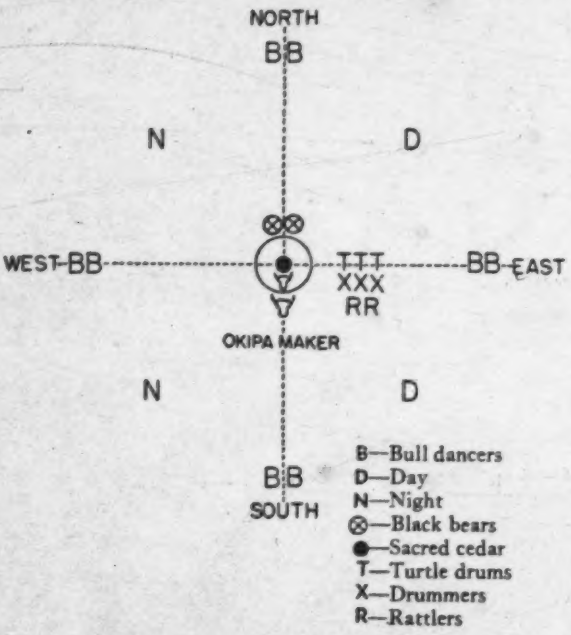


FIG. 15.—Direction symbolism for the bull dances

dressed as on the previous day and placed the pipe and pemmican ball in front of the turtles. He proceeded to the south side of the sacred cedar, where he again wept as he prayed to Lone Man to bring the buffaloes near and keep bad luck away from the village. While he was praying, the drummers began to beat the drums and sing, which was the signal for the Bull Dancers to come out. The people would congregate on lodges and around the open circle to observe these elaborately painted actors who performed the dances which were the most colorful of

22. Men bought the right and privilege to paint the characters of the ceremony. The Okipa Maker paid the painters for their services.

2: Bowers E-5 (1930-1931)1950 NQ17 Mandan NQ17

the whole ceremony. The Bulls danced directly toward the sacred cedar and formed a circle around it, then formed in pairs to mark out the four cardinal points, and, finally separated to mark the eight directions (see Fig. 15). A change in rhythm was a signal for the Bulls to return to the Okipa lodge.

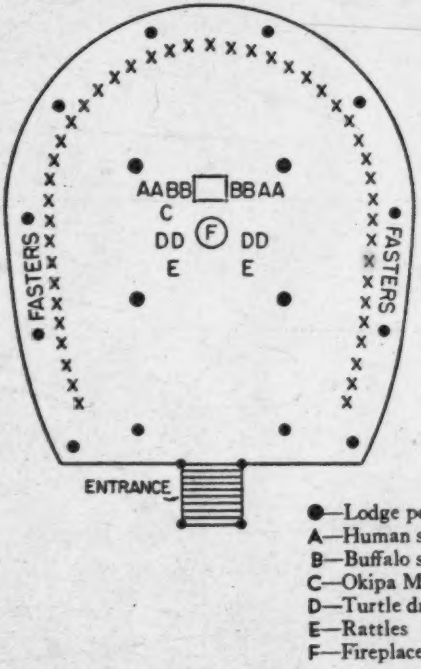


FIG. 16.—Lodge plan prior to torture feature. (After Catlin.)

The drummers, rattlers, Okipa Maker, and the eight Bull Dancers came out eight times the second day and repeated the same performance. The fasters came out only once the second day, following the first appearance of the Bulls. They formed a row at the south side of the sacred cedar and were dressed in buffalo robes with the hair side out. They returned into the lodge last and did not come out again that day (see Fig. 16).

Fasters began to present themselves for the torture feature[23]

23. Cutting off the fingers in the Okipa gradually died out and was uncommon after 1837, though it continued to be a practice when mourning a death or when fasting on a hill or in a remote place. It was said that a man in a dream was instructed that the fingers were needed to handle firearms.

3:Will and Spinden E-5 (1905) 1906
NQ17 Mandan NQ17

The sixth group was that of the "Black-tail Deer" and consisted of men over fifty years of age. There were two women in this band who served food and distributed fresh water during the dances. The men wore a crown of bears' claws.

There were a few other dances which were bought and sold, but which hardly deserve a place in the regular system. One of these was the dance of the "Half Shaven Head Band" which the lowest band could buy before reaching the proper age to buy into the "Soldier Band." Another was the "Old Dog Dance." The "Dog Band" could buy this of the "Buffalo Band" before becoming Buffalos themselves or being able to. The "Hot Dance" was danced at Rouhptare by the youngest band, and also at the Hidatsa village where it was purchased from the Arikara. The dancers danced barefoot over live coals and plunged their hands into boiling water.

The women, too, were divided into bands. There were four of these of which the first was "The Band of the Gun" which consisted of the younger girls. Next was the "River Band." The third band was the "Hay Women" who sang only the scalp dance. The fourth and last band was that of the "Women of the White Cow," most of them were old, and they were all tattooed with black lines from the mouth to the base of the chin.

The marriage customs of the Mandan Indians differed little from those of their neighbors. Polygamy was common, although a large part of the men had but one wife. Descent was probably along the male line, though there may have been remains of an older custom of descent along the female line, for all the horses captured by a young man belonged to his sister. The women worked hard and were sometimes badly treated though not as a general rule. Lewis and Clarke says that infidelity was punishable by death. Maximilian says it was punishable by cutting off the woman's nose. When a man's wife was stolen he had a right to demand a horse from the abductor. Separations occurred among them quite frequently. Virtue among the women was held in high esteem but was rather scarce. There are accounts of a celebration where prizes were given to the virtuous maids — these celebrations also took place

3:Will and Spinden E-5 (1905) 1906
NQ17 Mandan NQ17

sions of this story. None of the Caddoan Poor Boy stories have been found in the Mandan, but this may be due to the limited extent of Maximilian's collection. It can only be said that the Mandan myths so far as known seem to be about an equal mixture of north and south plains types.

CEREMONIALS:—The Mandan dance system seems to have been rather complicated, and in it are found again the two conflicting influences. In one case the origin of the dances is said to have been due to Ochkih-Hedde, the evil spirit. Again the First Chief who led them out of the ground is said to have arranged all their dances, and the Okeepa, according to Catlin, was instituted by the First Man. There were two sorts of dances; first those in which it appears that anyone could take part, and secondly those belonging to the different societies previously referred to.* Of the first kind there were four principal ones, and of these the Buffalo dance and the Scalp dance, although not the most important, were most frequently danced and were practically identical with the same dances of other plains tribes; the Scalp dance was performed by those related to persons with newly acquired coups. The Buffalo dances were of two types. One was for the purpose of getting the good will of influential men and is described by Henry and Catlin. This dance had several obscene features. The other Buffalo dance was danced by the men in relays wearing a buffalo head and its purpose was to bring the buffalo in time of need.

The other two dances deserve more particular mention. Catlin says of all these dances,[1] "Every dance has its peculiar step and song." The songs were understood only by the medicine men and required much application and study. Candidates paid to learn them. This applies particularly to the Okeepa which is the best-known dance of the Mandans. No description is necessary as Catlin has given two very full ones and Maximilian has also given a good account of it. The Okeepa was performed once a year as a rule and nearly every inhabitant of the village had some part to play in it. It lasted four days, and in all the dances, dance groups and ceremonial

* [Cf. pp. 129-561, esp. 116.—Analyst]

[1] Op. cit., vol. 1, p. 126.

3: Will and Spinden E-5 (1905) 1906
NQ17 Mandan NQ17

535 796 objects, they kept a careful observance of the number four and its multiples. The Okeepa appears to have been quite different from the usual sun-dance ceremonies, although the sun-dance observance formed a part of it. Catlin says that no other nation had such a dance, although many had features of it in their own dances. In some respects it seems to show a rather remarkable similarity to some of the dances of the Pueblo region and very possibly some of these features were transmitted from there through the southern plains tribes. The resemblance is in small details such as the decorating of the ark with willow branches which is much like the preparation of the kisi. Communication with old villages underground was supposed to be established by pounding on the ark, as it was among the southwestern dancers by stepping on the sipapu. From the description of the sacred object in the center of the Mandan altar, it seems to have been something like the Pueblo squash blossoms. Lastly the story of the visit of the First Man to the whites and his institution of the Okeepa, after having escaped them, is much like the origin story of the Pueblo Snake and Antelope Dance. The most peculiar feature of the ceremony was the connection which it had with the flood myth; the ark was supposed to be a copy of the tower in which the Mandans were saved from the flood. It formed the center in all the different parts of the ceremony. The Okeepa had features which have been ascribed by Maximilian to the influence of early missionaries.

535 796 171

535 796 241 The second of these dances was the Corn Dance and this was doubtless of Caddo origin. This dance was danced to the Old Woman Who Never Dies by the old women of the village for whom a number of old men furnished the music. Each old woman carried an ear of corn on the end of a stick and the ceremony was intended to consecrate this corn. After the consecration the corn was distributed, a few grains to each family, by whom it was mixed with the seed corn for spring planting. The ceremony took place when the representatives of The Old Woman Who Never Dies — the water birds — returned north, and a quantity of dried meat was hung up on the scaffolds as a sacrifice. After the dance this dried meat

3:Will and Spinden E-5 (1905) 1906
Mandan NQ17

became the property of the dancers. Another corn dance was held in the fall, but Maximilian tells us that the purpose of this one was to bring the buffalo. In this dance each woman carried a whole stalk of corn—the corn was called by the name of the water bird which represented it, and a prayer was made to the Old Woman Who Never Dies through these birds. The birds going south were supposed to carry these prayers to their mistress, and in this dance each old woman made a sacrifice of some valuable article. The elements of the corn dance agree in most particulars with those of the Pawnee and southern plains tribes.

BURIAL:—In their burial customs the Mandans show close analogy with the Sioux. Their cemeteries were usually only two hundred to three hundred paces from the palisade and consisted of a number of scaffolds on which the dead were placed. These scaffolds were made on four posts about twelve feet high, the length of the rectangle being about six feet. Across the posts willow rods, just strong enough to support the body, were placed.[1] When a person died he was left in the village but a very short time; the face was painted red, the body was oiled, dressed in the finest clothes and wrapped in a green buffalo skin or at a later period in a piece of cloth. The whole was then tightly wrapped with thongs of rawhide from head to foot. Then other robes were soaked in water and tightly wrapped and tied around the body. After this the corpse was immediately carried out and placed on the scaffold together with a bow and quiver, shield, pipe and tobacco, knife, flint and steel and provisions for several days. In case of a child, it was wrapped up in a small bundle which was tied to the scaffold by a cloth or hide. Catlin says the bodies were placed with their feet to the rising sun. Maximilian says the face was turned to the east.[2] Lewis and Clarke[3] give an account of a different sort of burial which must have been of rare occurrence for we find no mention of anything of the sort elsewhere. It is as follows: "An old man . . . . . one hundred and twenty winters old, he requested his grand Children to Dress him after Death, & Set him on a Stone on a hill, with his

[1] Catlin; vol. 1, p. 89. [2] Op. cit., p. 279. [3] Feb. 20, 1805.

4: Lowie E-5 (1910-1911) 1913
NQ17 Mandan NQ17

When our fathers had sat down, one of our number, Wounded-face, rose and said, "Well, comrades and women friends, listen. We have brought our food here, and we wish to select our fathers tonight. Do each of you rise and set your food before your father." Then each of us rose, picked up his kettle, and walked past the door-side of the fireplace to his father. I picked out one of my clan fathers and gave him my kettle; then I returned to my place. Black-head, who had watched my movements, then came forward and brought her kettle to the man indicated as my father. Those purchasers who had no clan fathers among the sellers selected anyone they pleased for their individual father. The fathers ate of the food, leaving some for their wives, who emptied the kettles and returned them to their husbands. Then Good-bear called me by name and said, "Come, son, and get your kettle." I went towards him and stood before him. Then Good-bear prayed to the supernatural powers: "I have gone through the Oki'pɛ ceremony myself and have undergone great hardships for your sake. In other ceremonies I have also undergone suffering. Before I underwent this suffering, I thought you would help me whenever I could not do something by my own power. I have no power to give honor marks, therefore I ask you to help me by securing honor marks for my son." Then I took both kettles and went back to my place, where I returned to Black-head her own kettle. Each of the boys acted in a similar way.

After all of us had sat down, our fathers began to sing. They beat drums, but did not dance. They sang these words: —

"ma'kitâ'ni mâhuna."
"You, wake up and come."

[These words are supposed to be addressed to one's sweetheart.]

Four times they sang such songs. Then came a second set of songs, during which the fathers danced in their places. When they had done dancing, they addressed us in obsolete Mandan, saying, "Sî! i'karẽ'xoc!" ("Clan son, daylight is here!") Shot-foot, one of the fathers, rose to address us. He said, "Sî, we wish you to give us a ten nights' feast. This will give us time to prepare clothes for you."

This meeting took place in the evening, each of our female "friends" brought in a bundle of willows carried by means of a tump line and a second line passing around the breast. The bundles were piled up on the left side of the door (for one entering), and from time to time one of the boys would rise to keep up the fire. This purchase took place in midsummer. I was about 20 years old at the time.

On each of the ten nights the fathers came in in the same way as the first time, and the mode of procedure was the same. On the tenth night, the fathers said, "Sons, we have done; tomorrow we shall give you your things." On the following morning we came back to the same lodge and took our seats, but without any kettles. Our women "friends" also came in and sat down. This time, however, we were not ranged in an ellipse as before, but sat in the arc of a circle, with our "friends" in a similar arc from 4½ to 5 feet behind us. Until this day White-bear's house had served as the place of assembly for the fathers prior to their approach to our own meeting-place, but this morning each came from his own lodge, their wives carrying the clothes to be presented to the purchasers of the society. The fathers sat down in a curved line opposite to ours, and their wives took seats behind them. There were about thirty fathers; sometimes two boys had the same father. They planted two sticks into the ground in the rear (mana'ktata) of the lodge. One of the sticks was hooked, and its shaft was wrapped with otterskin; three eagle feathers hung down from the end of the hook. The second stick was straight and also wrapped with otterskin;

4: Lowie E-5 (1910-1911) 1913
NQ17 Mandan NQ17

575 to the top of the shaft there was fastened a single eagle feather. The bottom of
575 both staffs was blunt, but in order to secure them in their places a sharp-pointed stick
432 had been previously driven into the ground there. The fathers had two hand-
527 drums. The father nearest the door took the hooked stick (ma'nanû'skup) which
533 had been set at the left side of the straight stick (ma'nacû'cuk) for one facing the
535 door, and held it in his hand, while the last father in line took the straight stick. The
293 two fathers standing nearest the staff-holders bore rattles. The drums were beaten, but before the rest of the fathers rose Shot-foot addressed us, saying, "Sons, you will keep our society, you will dance today." Then the fathers all rose, and the singing began. The staff-bearers advanced towards the boys, shouting, while the rest danced in their places. When the staff-bearers had got to the fireplace, the singing ceased. Each of the two officers then went to his son and led him to a spot between the two main posts on the right side of the lodge (for one facing the entrance), and gave his stick to his son. On this occasion Water-chief received the straight stick, and White-eye the bent stick. Next Shot-fox rose with his rattle and — this time without any singing or dancing — walked straight towards his son, Long-tail, whom he led to the place between the two posts used by the staff-bearers and presented with his rattle. The second rattler went through a corresponding procedure. Then the wives of the four officers who had just disposed of their emblems came forward to give the newly prepared clothes to their sons. The spectators, during all this performance, were restricted to the space between the door and the two front posts. From among these outsiders there now advanced the relatives of the new officers in order to pile up property before them or to present small sticks representing the promise to donate a horse.

575 The fathers said, "Now, sons, all of you stand up!" All the fathers then walked
432 towards us, followed by their wives, who carried the clothing and laid it down before
527 the sons. All of us put on the new clothes on the spot. The fathers who had
533 surrendered their rattles stood next to their sons, whom they wished to assist in
534 singing. The fathers who had owned the two officers' staffs said to the new incumbents: "There is an abundance of enemies; try to be brave!" The fathers who had carried rattles said the same to *their* sons, adding: "You will sing for your society, and I must teach you now. When you sing outdoors, you shall circle round to the right, and all will follow you." The first rattler accordingly led the procession in a circle until he had got near the second rattler, where he stopped and began to sing. The second rattler then also sang a song, shaking a tin-can rattle. In the procession outdoors the marchers walked at a very rapid pace.

Four female associates followed the men. These were called "Fox women" and had been appointed by their own families to assist the Foxes at their feasts and in the singing. They stood outside the circle formed by the society when dancing outdoors, but also took part in the dance. These women were unmarried, but later two of them, Pumpkin-blossom and Otter, married members of the society.

[349] After we had marched out of our lodge, we went to an open space east of the Round Corral.[1] Four of our fathers stepped inside the circle we formed there, and sang for us, beating their drums. We danced and then went home. This first public dance was the only occasion on which our fathers sang for us.

After a few days we came together and danced in Water-chief's lodge. During indoor performances we sat in an arc round the lodge and did not make use of our

[1] This is the structure described by Catlin and Maximilian as the "ark."

4: Lowie E-5 (1910-1911) 1913
NQ17 Mandan NQ17

regalia. After a few days spent in hunting we again gathered in our meeting-house and had an abundance of food prepared. Some time in the spring we went outside in our regalia and danced publicly, whereupon we would return to the lodge, dance again, and then have a feast. This happened about three or four times a year. Frequently members of the society went out at night in their ordinary costume and walked from house to house, singing in front of every lodge. This was done to please the young women of the village. The four Fox women did not take part in these nocturnal processions, but other girls accompanied the men and sang with them.

In addition to the rattlers and the staff-bearers, there were two men distinguished by their regalia from the rank and file. One of these wore a cap (mapa'caci wa'ah-ku'pe) of kit-fox skin, with the ears sticking up.[1] This officer acted as a sort of

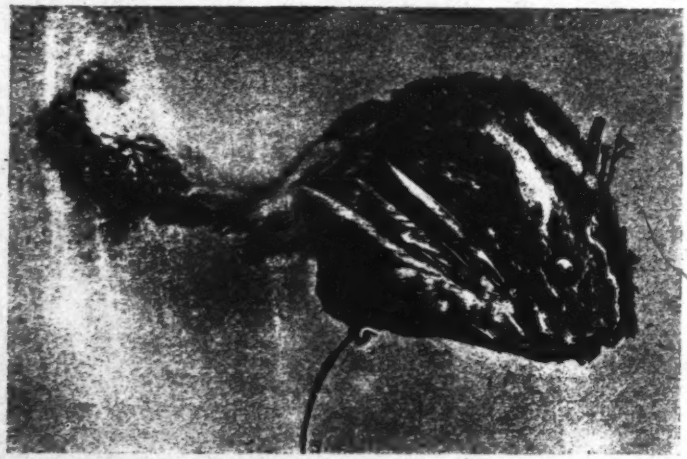


Fig. 10. (50.1–4232). Cap of Mandan Kit-Fox Society. Length, 127 cm.

spokesman for the society, but was not regarded as the chief of the organization. The other officer wore a head band decorated with kit-fox jaws (Fig. 17).

The Black Mouth society was regarded as friendly to our Kit-Fox group. They sat with us when we purchased the society and contributed to the food given to our fathers, though not to the property paid to them. When a new rattler did not at once learn his song and was accordingly afraid to try it, the Black Mouth officer bearing a "dance flag" took his place for a while. After the purchase the Black Mouths participated in our feasts. Sometimes we got together in the house of Two-chiefs, a Black Mouth; if any Black Mouth so desired he might then join us in the dancing.

Sometimes we gathered instead in the house of Foolish-soldier, a Stinking-Ear (see p. 294). Foolish-soldier acted as our herald. He would get up on the roof of a lodge and announce our meeting.

Bear's-ghost, Crow's-heart, Black-eagle, Sitting-crow, White-owl, and their associates should have bought the Kit-Fox society from us. As they did not do so, we still own it."

[1] Wounded-face's cap is shown in Fig. 10.

4: Lowie E-5 (1910-1911) 1913
NQ17 Mandan NQ17

Like Black-chest, Wounded-face selected a clan father, Two-crows, for 575
his individual father. Wounded-face did not know that Two-crows owned 432
two kinds of emblems,— the foxskin cap to be used in dancing and in war, 292
and the head band decorated with the lower kit-fox jaws which was to be 608
worn when courting young women.[1] On the morning of the final transference of membership rights, Two-crows gave Wounded-face the cap and the head band, as well as a shirt, armlets and fringed buckskin leggings. In return, Wounded-face paid his father a fast black horse suited for use in the buffalo chase and some property contributed by his relatives. I get the impression that the transfer of special regalia was automatic; that is to say, if the father happened to own certain specific emblems the son buying his membership bought *ipso facto* the regalia owned by the seller.

Little-crow states that at the public performance the relatives of the new 575
members brought presents, which were turned over to the fathers, either 431
individually or collectively. In the latter case the fathers proceeded to 602
distribute the gifts among themselves.

In marching outdoors, the first rattler took the lead and was immediately 575
followed by the first hooked-staff officer; Wounded-face — presumably as 527
the owner of the cap — occupied a central position in the line; the second 535
rattler came last, being directly behind the second hooked-staff officer. 533
The first rattler selected a site for the dance and turned in order to begin the formation of a circle there, at the same time raising his rattle and singing very loudly. There was always a special song to be sung prior to the drummers' entrance into the circle. This song was taken up by the second rattler. While the circle was forming, the singers went within the circumference and began to beat their drums. These singers were always the members' fathers, if I understood Wounded-face correctly, but it is probable that this applies only to the first public performance by a new group of members. The songs referred to warlike deeds, and the words [171]
were, according to this informant, invariably in the Dakota language.

Little-crow, as already stated, considers the head band decorated with 575
kit-fox jaws as a badge common to all members; he further states that [292]
each Kit-Fox had a hair-pipe attached to the left side of the head and that [302]
six men had their hair roached. The hair-cutting was done by the men's 293
fathers. Other informants agree that there were two rattlers and two officers with hooked-staffs, wrapped with otterskin and decorated at four points with feathers. Wounded-face says that sometimes the second staff-bearer carried a *straight* stick, in which case an erect eagle feather was secured to the top of the shaft. Little-crow states that rattles were used

[1] This seems to conflict with Black-chest's account, which assigns these emblems to distinct officers, but Little-crow regards the kit-fox head band as a badge common to all members.

4: Lowie E-5 (1910-1911) 1913
NQ17 Mandan NQ17

575 293 outdoors, and drums within the lodge, but this contradicts the accounts of others. The rattles were originally made of gourds, but in Wounded-face's time baking-powder cans had been substituted.

575 The Fox women, according to Wounded-face, were selected by the fathers' wives. Their robes were decorated with honor marks earned by their male associates. Little-crow mentioned only two Fox women, selected by the members themselves, and placed in the middle of the line of march.

575 703 The military element was obviously prominent in the society. Water-chief relates that on the first public appearance of the new members, each one was called by name by the older men and women of the village and addressed as follows: "We have numerous enemies, you are the one that must fight and try to be a man. You must not forget this when you are in a fight." Later in the season, when Water-chief had struck a coup and received a wound, his people rejoiced, telling him, "That is what you desired to do, you are a brave man." Little-crow declared that the Kit-Foxes did not dance very frequently,— in fact only when the approach of an enemy was reported. Wounded-face, while stating that dances were occasionally performed solely for the sake of amusement and in order to attract the attention of young women, also said that the Foxes danced very often in times of war, beginning as soon as a scout had brought the news of an enemy's approach. The Foxes tried to be brave in battle. Wounded-face recalls an occasion when a very brave enemy, surrounded by the Mandan, was holding his foemen at bay; finally, a Kit-Fox advanced towards him, struck him, and was killed. On another occasion a Kit-Fox together with four companions, set out on a war party. All five were killed by the enemy. This event was commemorated in song: "Once two enemies went into the bush. We surrounded them. One Kit-Fox went forward, and they killed him there."

● [535]

575 The purely social features of the organization were also conspicuous. Public appearances were followed by feasts after the members had returned to their lodge. There were occasional horse parades by the Kit-Foxes, and the nocturnal processions referred to by Black-chest were of frequent occurrence.

Little Dog Society.

575 424 While Black-chest's and Wounded-face's group owned the Fox society, their fathers were Little Dogs (mini'sinik ō'xat'e) [1]; that is to say, after

[1] The present meaning of the native term seems to be "colt society," but the older informants consider the above rendering correct in the context given and consider the society related to the Hidatsa Little Dog organization. Maximilian also translates *menēs* "dog." A corresponding confusion was encountered in the case of the other Mandan societies named for the dog.

4: Lowie E-5 (1910-1911) 1913
NQ17 Mandan NQ17

575 292 the war-medicine given by the father to the son at the time of the membership sale. Wounded-face says that there were four sash-wearers.

Besides the sash-wearers, there were three (Wounded-face again speaks of four) officers wearing headdresses of buffalo-skin, decorated with sections of horns and strips of weasel skins. The headgears were secured by means of neckstrings, which also served to fasten them to the stretched rope at the time of the purchase (see p. 307). To the back of the headdresses there were attached strips of rawhide, about 3½ feet in length and decorated with quillwork. Horsetails, dyed yellow, were fastened to the tops of the horns, and occasionally hawk-wings were used for decorating the headdresses.

Wounded-face is alone in speaking of two additional officers bearing lances, that were decorated at the top and center with a bunch of short raven wing-feathers. The use of a feathered string with these lances was optional.

575 432 Yellow-hair mentions four drummers, each of whom gave his drum to his son at the time of the membership sale.

575 432 527 When the purchase had been consummated after the twenty nights' entertainment, the fathers, according to Yellow-hair, passed out of the lodge, lamenting the loss of their songs,—some of them even pretending to cry. On the other hand, the purchasers began to sing and rejoice. They went outdoors, formed a circle, and sang there. After a while they returned to their lodge, followed by their wives. Supper had been prepared. The new Crazy Dogs and their wives feasted, and then went home. On the next day the fathers invited the purchasers and their wives, gave them breakfast, and presented the men with clothes and regalia and the women with dresses. In return, the sons gave horses to their fathers. After this exchange of gifts, the members frequently assembled to practise the newly acquired [535] dance. The women never danced, but might take part in the singing. In dancing the Crazy Dogs jumped up with both feet and shook their rattles as an accompaniment to the drums. In a parade, the headdress-wearers took the lead, one marching behind the other; the sash-wearers had no fixed place.

575 535 Among the Mandan of Ruhptare Maximilian found that the Crazy[1] Dogs performed the Hot dance. After a large fire had been built, a number of glowing embers were scattered about, and then the boys, stripped of all clothing, danced on them with their bare feet. The hands, forearms, and feet of the performers were colored red. Sliced meat was boiling in a kettle over the fire. When the meat had been well done, the dancers put their

[1] Maximilian writes: "Die kleinen Hunde, deren Namen man nicht kennt, führen ihn auf." The modifying clause makes it clear that he is referring to the first society of his series.

4: Lowie E-5 (1910-1911) 1913
NQ17 Mandan NQ17

hands into the boiling water, took out some of the meat, and ate it at the risk of scalding themselves. Those coming last to the kettle had the worst of it, for they were obliged to dig down deeper into the water than their predecessors. During the dance the performers carried weapons and rattles in their hands.

I did not obtain any Mandan description of the Hot dance. My Hidatsa information is given on p. 253.

Crow Society.

Maximilian translates the name of the society Hä'derucha-O'chatä as "Crow, or Raven, band." [1] Its members were from 20 to 25 years old. Sometimes the younger men had not owned a society for half a year or longer. Then one of them went to a Hä'derucha and said to him, "Father, I am poor, but I wish to buy of you." If the father consented, the young men then received the raven feathers worn on the head by the members of the society, a double whistle formed of two goose wing bones fastened together, a drum, rattle, song, and dance. In this case, as in other societies, a head man decided whether the privileges sought by the younger men should be sold and he it was that the prospective buyers approached. Then a feast was prepared in the medicine lodge for forty nights, and the fathers were entertained at their sons' expense. Moreover, the purchasers surrendered their wives to the sellers every evening until the fathers were satisfied and abdicated their membership.

Half-shaved Heads.

My Mandan informants did not refer to this society (Ischohä-Kakoscho'chatä), though it was described by my Hidatsa friends (p. 272). According to Maximilian, the *Hä'deruch-O'chatä* bought the Half-Shaved Head dance from the Soldiers before they were old enough to become Soldiers. It is worth while to summarize Maximilian's detailed account of the purchase.

The buyers were to entertain the sellers for forty nights. On the first night the drum was beaten to call the negotiating parties to the medicine lodge. A fire was burning in the center, the women sat along the walls, while the white visitors and several noted Soldiers sat in front of the draught-

[1] Compare what is said above about the Hidatsa Aʒ'ɪrrō'ka society (p. 266).

4: Lowie E-5 (1910-1911) 1913
NQ17 Mandan NQ17

575 screen. Along the wall to the left sat the remaining Soldiers, about twenty-
432 five in number; while some were clad in fine garments, the majority dressed
527 in ordinary clothes. Some exposed the upper part of the body. In the
center three drummers seated themselves. The purchasers stood on the
right side of the fire. They were expected to give valuable presents to the
[537] Soldiers, to feast them and furnish them with tobacco for forty nights, and
every evening they were to offer them their wives. The sellers approached
the lodge amidst singing and drumming, and entered with their regalia.
[293] These consisted of four lances, from 7 to 8 feet long, with an iron head point-
ing downwards. The shaft was wrapped with broad bands of otterskin,
while pairs of otterskin strips were tied to the head and several other points
on the lance. Two of the lances were hooked, the two others were straight.
A fifth emblem consisted of a war club with iron point, which was colored
red and was decorated with several feathers in the back. Further there
were three lances, decorated alternately with black and white feathers, and a
beautifully ornamented bow and quiver. At first, the Soldiers remained
concealed behind the screen, and were merely holding these insignia so that
they projected into the main space of the lodge. After standing in this
position, singing and drumming violently, for a while, they entered, placed
the lances against the wall, and stuck the war club into the ground, near one
of the main pillars. Then they all took seats along the wall. While the
[576] singing and drumming was alternately renewed, the purchasers prepared
their pipes, and handed them to each of the guests in turn, for which act
they stooped, holding the mouthpiece towards the smokers. When the
guests had taken a few puffs, the purchasers did likewise, and then carried
the pipe in regular order, from right to left, to each of the sellers. This
smoking consumed considerable time; each guest, during this part of the
[535] performance, was also presented with a little cake of sweet-corn. After
about half an hour, two of the Soldiers rose and danced towards each other.
One of them seized the war club, and held it stiffly in his left hand, while the
right hung straight down. Bending the upper part of his body forward,
he jumped stiffly into the air with both feet; keeping time with the music.
The other dancer had fine decorations on his head and legs, and the upper
part of his body was likewise exposed. He seized one of the otterskin lances,
which he held, sloping, between his two hands, and both men then danced
or hopped towards each other. After several minutes the second performer
put the lance away, and took a seat, while all the other members gave the
war whoop and gave vent to exclamations of joy, amidst vigorous beating
of the drum. Then there was silence. The man with the war club ad-
dressed the buyers, calling them his "sons," and recounted several of his
martial exploits, whereupon he handed them the war club. One of the

4: Lowie E-5 (1910-1911) 1913
NQ17 Mandan NQ17

535.

Fig. 11. Mandan Half-Shaved Head Dance. (Maximilian's Atlas.)

[p.311]

4: Lowie E-5 (1910-1911) 1913
NQ17 Mandan NQ17

575 purchasers then called him his "father," stroked his arm downwards with his hand, took the weapon out of his hand, and again put it in its place. 432 The other dancer followed, recounted some of his deeds, and offered the 527 lance to one of the buyers, who received it in the same manner as his predecessor, and then put it in its place. The periods of intermission were filled with smoking, singing and drumming, but no rattles were used. Two other Soldiers also rose, told of how they had stolen horses, medicine bundles, or other possessions, from the enemy, and gave two more insignia to the purchasers. After this had been done four or five times, the wives of the [837] buyers rose. Four of them divested themselves of their robes, quickly seized the lances, and carried them, one after another, outside the lodge. After a while they brought them in again. This ceremony was repeated twice, the disrobed women stroked the arms of the strangers and fathers, put on their robes, and passed outside. The persons stroked were expected to follow them into the woods. This procedure resembled that of the Hidatsa in their medicine festival.[1]

575 Some time after the purchase Maximilian had occasion to observe the dance of the new Half-Shaved Heads. About twenty of them entered the 535 Fort, threw off their robes so as to expose their gaily colored bodies, and 302 formed a circle. They were elaborately decorated and carried the insignia of the dance, such as the otter-wrapped sticks. One man wore a bonnet with horns and ermine strips; another, mounted on horseback, was decorated with paint symbolizing the blood from wounds. Three Soldiers (= Black Mouths) served as musicians. As soon as the drum was beaten, the dancers protruded the upper part of their bodies, and leaped into the air with both feet, at the same time holding their guns ready for firing. Thus they danced in the circle for about a minute, then hallooed, rested for a while, and resumed their performance. After receiving some tobacco, they dispersed, put on their robes, and went to Ruptare, where they also danced among the Hidatsa.[2] A picture of the dance, reproduced from Maximilian's Atlas is shown in Fig. 11.

Black Mouths.

575 The native name of this society is *ī'he poi'here ō'zat'e*, or *numā'k xarā'k* 625 *ō'zat'e*. Maximilian calls the members of this society "Soldiers." They form the third society in his list, but he states that all the higher classes

[1] Maximilian, II, 274–277.
[2] Maximilian II, 286–287.

4: Lowie E-5 (1910-1911) 1913
NQ17 Mandan NQ17

575 293 [302] Mouths were also called "Brave Men's society." They painted their faces black. The Goose women used the same paint, because their society was founded by the same man. When the time came for singing, the first rattler walked ahead and began to sing. Then the drummers took up the song. The next time the second rattler acted in the same manner. The raven-lance bearers had a special song and dance, during which they crossed each other's path.

575 726 554 533 535 One summer, when the society wished to give a performance because some Sioux were coming to fight, they stuck two tipi poles into the ground, and tied raven-lances to the top. One of the Soldiers cried, "Kā! Kā! Kā!" This was in imitation of crows. Then some other member went outside the lodge to see which one had cried. Returning, he said, "It is not a living raven, but the raven head on Skunk's lance." Skunk was a very brave man. The people said, "We will find out what this means." Then someone took the lances down, and returned them to their owners. Skunk said, "Hold on, my fellow-members, I wish to know the reason why my lance is singing." He got his associate to accompany him, and both lance officers then went through the village, singing this song: —

"kē'ka, nasarā'rōoca. mī' ō'watē'roc.
"Raven, you sing. I want to die.
"kika're e'henik, ō'ota."
"If you are afraid, go away."

The people hearing Skunk thought him braver than ever. They said to him, "This is your day, do what you wish best." The people encouraged Skunk. When the society started outdoors for a dance, Skunk took the lead, and again sang. A circle was formed. All the people came to watch the performance. Skunk once more sang his song. He danced alone, in a slanting line. These were the words of his song: —

"mīnukarité, nū'tamina'tare hū'miikāc. i'miinahèc."
"My friends, our enemies are numerous. I am used to it" [that is, to fight].

When the time came to fight, Skunk struck many coups. This is what the singing of the raven had indicated.

575 626 In addition to the police functions described by Maximilian, Wounded-face mentions a special duty devolving on the two pipe-bearers. When some villager wished to kill a fellow-tribesman, these officers filled up a pipe, and gave him presents in order to make him desist. Acceptance signified acquiescence in their wishes.

575 Water-chief became a Black Mouth, together with about twenty of his comrades, at thirty; generally, however, the members were older. They

4: Lowie E-5 (1910-1911) 1913
NQ17 Mandan NQ17

•535

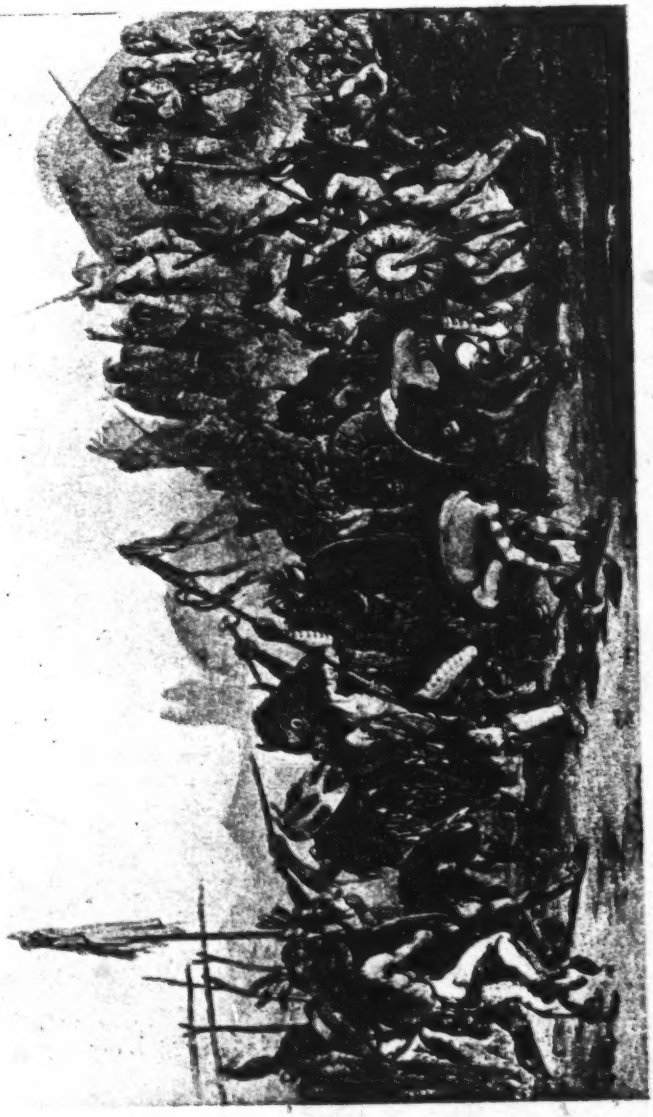


Fig. 12. Mandan Bull Dance. (Maximilian's Atlas.)

4: Lowie E-5 (1910-1911) 1913
NQ17 Mandan NQ17

buffalo skin, the hair of which, however, was exposed from the wearer's forehead down to his chin. The spears carried were not very long, and the head pointed downwards. Shields rested on the left arm. Members who had struck enemies, carried guns; if they had used arrows to kill a foe, they carried arrows. Wounds received in battle were symbolized by red body paint. While dancing in the village, the Bulls jumped around. They pointed spears and guns at anyone approaching them, and thereby frightened young people. Those who had slain enemies enacted their martial deeds. For music they used a *large* drum.

Calf-woman remembered seeing six women known as "Bull women" at a Bull performance; they sat behind the men singers. A woman brought in water, but only such members as had saved a woman's life were permitted to drink of it. This informant also remembers one of the mask-wearers pretending to spear people, and frightening the children, jumping up with both legs, and stamping one foot at a time.

The Bull dance described by Boller was not connected with the Bull society, but formed part of the Okipe as is obvious from comparison with Maximilian's and Catlin's accounts of this ceremony.[1]

Dog[1] Society.

Maximilian describes the emblem of the society as a stick a foot or a foot and a half in length, which was ornamented with blue and white beads, and to which a large number of animal hoofs were attached. To the front of the stick there was tied an eagle feather, to the lower extremity a piece of beaded leather. The members wore a large cap of colored cloth, to which were attached a great number of raven, magpie, and owl feathers, and which was further decorated with colored horsehair and weasel skins. Their whistle was large, and made from the wing bone of a swan. Three of them wore in the back sashes of red cloth similar to those of the Crazy Dog society. A bunch of owl, raven, or magpie feathers — and frequently a combination of all three — was attached to the head so as to hang down in the back. The three officers referred to were regarded as Real Dogs. People would throw a piece of meat into the ashes of a fire, or on the ground, and say, "You Dog, eat!" Then they were obliged to fall foul of it and to devour it like dogs or beasts of prey.

---

[1] Boller, 169–186; Maximilian, II. 174, 178; Catlin, I, 164 f.

[1] The native name is mîsi's ô'xatce. What was said above (p. 306) as to the translation of the word mîsi's applies in this case also. The equivalence of the Hidatsa Dog society cannot be doubted, and Maximilian's rendering of the Mandan name supports this view.

4: Lowie E-5 (1910-1911) 1913
NQ17 Mandan NQ17

575 535 292 302

A dance of the "Dog society" of Ruptare village that was witnessed by Bodmer is described by Maximilian. After a performance in their lodge, the members, twenty-seven or twenty-eight in number, advanced towards the Fort. Some were clad in beautiful robes or bighorn-skin shirts, others in red cloth shirts, or blue and red uniforms. Some exposed the upper part of their body, on which coups were indicated in reddish-brown paint. In this connection the Prince speaks of *four* Real Dogs, all wearing huge bonnets of raven or magpie feathers, tipped with small white plumes, while in the center there was a fan of the tail feathers of a wild turkey or eagle. Round the neck each of these officers wore a long strip of red cloth, which extended down the back as far as the calves and was knotted in the middle of the back. Two additional officers wore similarly colossal bonnets of yellowish owl feathers, with dark oblique stripes, and one had a large, horned war-bonnet with a feathered streamer hanging down in the back. All others were ornamented with a bunch of thickly-set raven, magpie, or owl feathers, which was considered emblematic of the society. All members wore long whistles, and carried in their left arm some weapon, while the hoof rattle was held in the right hand. A circle was formed. In the center [534] there was a large drum, which was beaten by five poorly clad musicians; in addition to these men, who were seated, two drummers stood on the side, beating hand-drums. After whistling in their places in accompaniment to the rapid and violent beats of the drum, the Dogs suddenly began to dance, dropping their robes to the ground. Several of them danced in the middle of the circle, leaning their bodies forward, jumping up some distance with both feet and coming down firmly on the ground. The other Indians danced without any attention to orderly arrangement, crowding one another, turning their faces towards the circle, and occasionally joining in lowering the head and upper part of the body.[1]

575 534 292 301

Wounded-face says that the rattle (wĭ'o oxerō're) consisted of a stick covered with buckskin, to which the hoofs of young buffalo were attached. There were two men with sashes, which were half green and half yellow, and which were decorated with feathers. The skin cap had magpie feathers tied to it in a large bunch, and a white plume was fastened to every feather. Two eagle feathers, together with owl feathers, were also used for a head ornament. A large whistle was suspended from a wide strip of skin decorated with quillwork. The body was painted red. All the members carried the hoof-rattles, and sometimes they beat a drum or a log with them. All the Dogs were portly old men, slow in their dancing. Wounded-face thinks the society originated with the Hidatsa.

---

[1] Maximilian, II, 309–311.

4: Lowie E-5 (1910-1911) 1913
NQ17 Mandan NQ17

Old Dog Society.[1]

Maximilian, while not including this society in his list of age-classes, states that the Old Dog-dance was one which the Dogs might buy of the Bulls before they were permitted to become Bulls. The Old Dog dancers painted their bodies white, and their hands red and black. They wore a grizzly skin round the body, and on the head feathers which hung down in the back.

Wounded-face knew nothing of the organization save the name. He had heard that they dressed similarly to the Dogs.

Coarse Hair Society.

Wounded-face had only heard of this society (bacā'ca ō'xat'e) from his grandfather. There was something sacred about it. A young man going on the warpath promised the members to give them a dance provided he performed some brave deed in battle. When dancing, the members dressed up. On the head they placed a piece of scalp from a buffalo head of the size of a human scalp. Hair was attached to the scalp so as to hang over the members' faces. They put honor marks on their clothes. The left leggings were painted red up to the knee, and black marks were put round the lower legs as a sign that the wearer had struck many enemies. Leaders in war who had killed enemies tied human hair to the leggings. For each enemy struck in war, a member put one feather on his head. If he had been wounded by an arrow, the split feather from an arrow, dyed red, was worn on the head. A gun wound was indicated by a stick about 9 inches in length, and whittled at the lower end so that the shavings remained on the stick. The young warrior providing for the entertainment of the performers filled a pipe for them, and, if possible, presented them with horses or eagle feather bonnets. He asked them to pray for him. All the older men rejoiced in such a feast.

It is possible, but by no means certain, that this society corresponds to Maximilian's As-Cho'h-O'chatā (Ascho'-O'chatä). On the 23rd of December, 1833, a large number of Indians visited the Fort, led by fourteen members of this society from the village of Ruptare. The entire head was covered with a wig of long, flat braids of hair, which fell over the face, completely hiding it. Feathers of the owl, raven, and of birds of prey,

[1] minis' xixe' ō'xat'e.

4: Lowie E-5 (1910-1911) 1913
NQ17 Mandan NQ17

575 each tipped with a thick white plume, adorned the head. One member
292 carried a beautiful fan of white feathers, and wore on the head a complete
535 swan's tail, each feather of which was decorated with dyed horsehair. The
[293] members wrapped themselves completely in their robes, and carried bow-lances trimmed with feathers, colored cloth, glass beads, and the like; most of them had fox skins attached to their heels. Several men beat a drum, while the rest formed a circle and imitated the sound of buffalo bulls. After they had danced for a while, the spectators threw a quantity of tobacco down for them, whereupon they departed for the village in the woods, taking off their wigs on the way. In another place, the Prince mentions rattles as well as drums, and states that the bow-lances were also decorated with bear guts.[1]

Black-Tail Deer Society.

575 All the old men above fifty were, according to Maximilian, members of
561 the Black-Tail Deer organization (cu'psi ō'xat'e). Two female attendants
301 cooked and served fresh water during a dance. All of the men wore a
554 wreath of grizzly claws round the head, and displayed their honor marks in the form of feather head ornaments, braids of hair on arms and legs, scalps, painting, etc.

575 Wounded-face says that the organization originated on the Bad Creek,
773 near the Heart River. One day two young men with arrows stayed on a high wooded hill by the Creek. They dug a deep pit, put sticks across, and covered them with grass. They wanted to snare some animals. One morning one of the men went towards the trap. As he drew close, he heard signs of a trapped animal. He was glad, looked inside, and saw that he had caught a large and very fat black-tail deer. He fitted an arrow to his bow, but the deer said, "Don't shoot me." "Why not?" "You are my son, you must not shoot me. Make a path for me to get out." The young man obeyed, and the buck got out. Then he said, "You are a young man, and I know what you desire: honor marks. I have the power to give them to you, but you have many other fathers, who will instruct you later." He stretched his legs, jumped away, and went some distance. Then he stretched his legs again, and sang a song. When his song was ended, he went towards a wooded hill. The young man knew there was a house there. It belonged to the Deer, and the door closed with a thud. The house was the Black-Tail lodge.

---

[1] Maximilian, II. 145f., 281f.

4: Lowie E-5 (1910-1911) 1913
NQ17 Mandan NQ17

Gun Society.

575 Hides-and-eats says that in the Gun society (Mandan: ĭ'rupe ŏ'xat'e) there was no adoption. Three men who had guns for their personal medicine went round the village, selecting young girls for the dance. The girls combed their hair loose, stuck feathers in the back like the Skunks,[1] put on their beaded belts and mountain-sheep dresses, and entered an earth-lodge, where they ranged themselves in the arc of a circle. The three men were seated between the fire and the screen between the two main poles facing the door; they were the singers and drummers. The girls danced up and down in their places, seating themselves when a song ended and rising to dance when a new one was intoned. At the close of each song one of the three men expressed the following prayer: "My sacred gun, I pray to you, I wish to conquer my enemies." One of the men rose, impaled food on a stick, and cast it into the fire as an offering to the guns. After a prayer, food that had been previously prepared was distributed among the members. This food must all be eaten on the spot; it was not permissible to take any of it away. At the close of the performance sweetgrass was placed on a potsherd with some charcoal and burnt for incense. One of the men went round with the sherd, beginning at the right side of the door, and smoked each member in turn.

Sometimes the dance was performed, not in an earth-lodge, but outdoors in the village. The Gun women danced only during one month in the summertime. The next year the three men selected other young girls or young married women for the performance.[2] The object of the ceremony was to prevent the recurrence of losses from the enemy.

From the statements quoted it appears doubtful whether the Gun "society" was really a society, though the same term *ŏ'xat'e* is applied to it as to the other organizations.

River Women Society.

575 The River Women society (pasa'ʻmĭ'he ŏ'xat'e) is called "Grass Crown society" (mikā'kikiĭ) by the Hidatsa.

The following origin legend had been heard by Hides-and-eats:

---

[1] Maximilian says they wore eagle plumes.

[2] Big-cloud, Bull-horn, and White-young-bear are said to have reörganized this society before the time of the smallpox.

4: Lowie E-5 (1910-1911) 1913
NQ17 Mandan NQ17

younger women called them and offered them property. "Then we adopted them and called them our daughters." Sometimes it happened that a single individual wished to join. In such a case she might buy a head band from a father's sister and become an additional member without replacing anyone. This, however, was not the regular way of entering the society.

In Hides-and-eats' time, there were two male head-singers, who called in five young men and taught them to sing, for which they received a compensation and were called "fathers" by the young men. From another statement by the same authority it would appear that the five men bought the right of singing and drumming from their predecessors in very much the same way as the young women bought the right to membership.

The officers of the society included a leader wearing a necklace of bear claws attached to otterskin; a rear officer with the same badge; and two middle officers with a loose-fitting white-shell necklace hanging down a few inches below the neck in front. There was one special member who surrendered to the society her earth-lodge to dance in; in Hides-and-eats' time this member's name was One-corn-seed. Calf-woman, who was one of the officers wearing a shell necklace, kept the dance-lodge, because her parents loved her dearly and never refused her anything. The ceremonial dance lasted four nights, the actual dancing beginning before sunset. The members were expected to remain in the earth-lodge during these four nights.[1] Some women, however, would clandestinely absent themselves and go home. As soon as the other members discovered their absence, they went to the woman's house, and sang outside, "Our friend, get up and come out here again." The drummers beat their drums, and the members, if necessary, seized the truant and brought her back to the dance lodge by force. The close of the performance was marked by a cleansing ceremony. The musicians tied together peppermint (?) stalks, and with these they brushed the members' bodies, from the shoulders down. The object of this was to remove the mysterious (xo'pinic) properties with which the members were endowed while dancing. In Calf-woman's time only one man, Bad-shirt performed this ceremony; he was paid with calico goods and food. Painted-up said the brusher was the singer of the Bird ceremony. The ceremonial cleansing took place only after the performances of the three *sacred* women's societies, that is, the River women, Goose women and White Buffalo women organizations.

Two-chiefs said that during the four nights' performance the head bands were suspended from a rawhide rope passing round the earth-lodge, and

[1] That is to say, they were not to sleep with their husbands. But if any member had a little child at home, she might go there to attend to its wants. In this case she was brought back to the lodge before daybreak.

4: Lowie E-5 (1910-1911) 1913
NQ17 Mandan NQ17
Hidatsa NQ14

happened to be an officer, her badge and office were simply transferred to the purchaser.

The Hidatsa derived this society from the Mandan, but did not consider it so sacred as the Mandan did. Thus, as stated above, the Mandan rule was that women must not sleep with their husbands but must remain in the dance lodge during the four nights of the dance. Among the Hidatsa only the unmarried members regularly stayed in the dance lodge overnight. The married women went home, unless their husbands consented to let them follow the Mandan regulation.

Although Buffalo-bird-woman denied that the dance was regarded as sacred by her people, two features seem to have a religious character. In the first place, the annual performance took place after someone having had a dream to that effect had given a feast to the organization. Secondly, the performance closed with the ceremonial sweating and cleansing. The women took off their grass head bands, removed the feathers from them, piled up the crowns on the top of the sweat lodge, and went in to sweat, a few at a time. Then a man approached, holding in his hand some sage-brush with which he brushed off the sweat lodge, singing a song. All the women rose and faced him, and he brushed off the women, one by one, singing a song for each member. This power, my informant imagined, had been acquired by purchase.

Cheyenne[1] Women Society.

Young-beaver who had entered the River Women society when not quite 20, bought the Cheyenne Women membership, with some thirty of her comrades, at the age of a little over 30. She still considers herself a member of the Cheyenne Women society.

The name of this organization (cō'ota mī ō'xat'e) indicates the source from which it is said to have been derived by the Mandan. Buffalo-bird-woman said that she first heard of the society about 56 years ago (1911), and that she joined as the only Hidatsa woman, her father having been asked for his consent. Any member who chose might assume men's garb. Some dressed like the Dakota, tying their front braids with otterskin, while others affected the long switches of the Crow. From two to four male singers were also chosen. At a dance of the organization a man carrying an eagle feather fan acted as leader, followed by the women in single file. At the intonation of a certain song, the leader held his fan close to his face,

[1] One interpreter translated the native word "Sioux."

4: Lowie E-5 (1910-1911) 1913
NQ17 Mandan NQ17

and turned about. The women also faced about. Then all advanced with a kind of shuffling movement the right and the left foot alternately, without moving from their places. The musicians, who carried drums, remained in the rear. All the women painted their faces and wore feathers in the back of the head in imitation of men. They formed a circle, and danced forward. A few women cut out strips of rawhide, decorated them with beads, and placed them on their heads as though they were horns. This is said to have been in imitation of the Cheyenne women. Some young men used to watch from the roofs of their lodges. Each member selected one of these men to dance with her. After a while his relatives brought calico and other goods for his partner in order to ransom him and absolve him from the necessity of continuing to dance with her.

In purchasing the society, the aunts or mothers presented dresses to their nieces or daughters while they received horses in return.

White Buffalo Cow Society.

The White Buffalo Cow society (ptĭ'take ō'xat'e) was the highest of the women's societies known to the Mandan and Hidatsa, the Old Women's organization (p. 338) really belonging to another category.

Maximilian says that the members painted one eye any color they pleased (most generally azure) and had black tattoo marks between lips and chin. Their headdress consisted of a broad strip of white buffalo cowhide worn in hussar-cap fashion and topped with a bunch of feathers.[1] In Maximilian's day each Mandan village had its own White Buffalo organization, and he had occasion to observe the performances of both. In the performance of the Mih-Tutta-Hangkusch society, seventeen, for the most part elderly, women and two men with rattles and drums took part; one of the men was holding a gun in his hand. The leader was an elderly woman wrapped in the skin of a white buffalo cow. In her right arm she carried cornucopia-fashion a bundle of twigs, tipped with plumes, with an eagle wing and a tin drinking vessel secured to the grip. Another woman also carried a bundle of this type. The men wore no headdresses. Of the women, two had skunk-skin head bands, the rest wore headdresses of white buffalo skin decorated in front with owl or raven feathers, which were partly dyed red. All women had the same face paint,— vermilion on the left cheek and eye, with two blue spots on the opposite temple, close to the right eye. The leader was wrapped in the skin of a white buffalo cow. All the others except two, who

[1] Maximilian, II, 145–146.

4: Lowie E-5 (1910-1911) 1913
NQ17 Mandan NQ17

wore robes with the hairy side out, wore painted women's robes. They formed a circle, the men began to sing, and the women danced, taking up the tune at the same time. They waddled like ducks from side to side, raising each foot alternately higher than the other, but not moving from their position. After a while there was an intermission, which was again followed by a dance. Only the older members had the tattoo marks between mouth and chin that were distinctive of the society. When Maximilian saw the society from Ruptare perform, there were three male musicians, who also wore white buffalo skin headdresses, and none of the women carried bundles of twigs. Otherwise the equipment was the same as in the other dance.[1]

An illustration of the dance of this society, reproduced from Maximilian's Atlas, is shown in Fig. 16.

Boller's account, which is of considerably later date, contributes the important fact that in case of a famine the White Buffalo Cow women were expected to make buffalo herds come nearer to the village. A similar function is attributed by Catlin to *male* Buffalo dancers wearing masks of a type described in this paper in connection with the Bull society (p. 315). Catlin, however, does not connect his Buffalo dance with any organization, for though only about ten or fifteen men are said to have joined in the dance at one time, he states that every Mandan was obliged to keep a buffalo mask for possible use in the buffalo-calling ceremony on the request of the chiefs.[2] Oddly enough, both Catlin and Boller say that their respective Buffalo dancers never failed to bring in the herds for the reason that they continued their performance for weeks if necessary, until buffalo were actually sighted. The dance of the society is thus described by Boller:

> The different members of the White-Cow band began to assemble, and soon the regular taps of the drum notified the camp that the great and important ceremony was in full progress. At one end of the lodge sat the musicians or drummers, three in number, who were untiring in their efforts, and aided their instrumentation by singing in a monotonous chanting strain. The women, comprising some forty or fifty matrons of the village, most of whose charms had unmistakably faded, were all attired in their quaintly garnished deer-skin dresses. Each had a spot of vermilion on either cheek, and their long black hair, which was carefully combed out and dressed with marrow grease, fell full and flowing over their shoulders, confined around the forehead with a fillet of white buffalo cow-skin. One of them had a white robe (which is very scarce, and held in the highest esteem) wrapped around her. This white robe was the common property of the band, and in its great power as a "medicine" were centred their hopes of bringing in the buffalo.[3]

---

[1] Ibid., 283–284, 297.
[2] Catlin, I, 127–128.
[3] Boller, 218–219.

4: Lowie E-5 (1910-1911) 1913
NQ17 Mandan NQ17

●535
292

Fig. 10. White Buffalo Cow Women. (Maximilian's Atlas.)

4: Lowie E-5 (1910-1911) 1913
NQ17 Mandan NQ17

I will now present my own field notes concerning this society. 575

Calf-woman joined the White Buffalo women when she was only two years old. Two years later she began to take part in the performances. 432
Some old women went round the village looking for a female child whose parents loved her dearly and had given away a great deal of property in her honor. They came to Calf-woman's parents, and these consented to have their daughter adopted. Calf-woman's mother gave 'Brave-woman one pony and several blankets on this occasion. Whenever there was a dance of the society, a member named Berry carried the newly adopted infant on her back. There were about fifty women members, and five men acted as singers. The most important dance, or ceremony, of the society took place once a year, in the winter, on four successive nights. Sometimes the dance was kept up every other night for a month. 535 ●

In preparation for the great ceremony the Indians of the village gathered an abundance of food and property for the society. Each member had a red line painted on the right side of her face, from temple to eyebrow, and a corresponding line in blue on the opposite side. All wore the buffalo skin caps emblematic of the organization and put on only on this special occasion, and moreover each member wore a buckskin dress and a robe. Three officers were distinguished by wearing their robes hair side out. The leader of this trio had a *white* buffalo skin robe; Calf-woman, who walked in the center, wore the best *calf* skin robe obtainable; and the third officer donned a *coarse*-haired robe. In approaching the earth-lodge where the ceremony was to be performed, the members halted four times on the way. At each stopping-place they formed a circle and danced in the same way as they were going to do in the lodge. The leader entered the lodge and made a circuit walking to the right (for one entering). A buffalo cow skull had been placed at the foot of the northwestern main pole in the center of the lodge, and *ătûre* was burnt for incense in front of it. A special incense-burner conducted the leader to the skull, letting her stand there so that she might be smoked, and then led her back again to her place. The two other officers mentioned above were similarly treated. North of the door, in a line in front of that joining the two southern center poles, sat the five men singers. As soon as these musicians began to sing, the leader, the middle officer, and the rear officer danced forward to the fireplace, where they met, and then danced in position, facing the fire. After they had returned to their original places, a special song was chanted. This was a signal for the incense-burner to go dancing from member to member and remove their robes. Then the dancing began. Every song and dance was repeated four times. Towards the close of the first night's performance a particular song was intoned, indicating that the paint was to be rubbed off

575 527 292

[778]

575 527 535

4: Lowie E-5 (1910-1911) 1913
NQ17 Mandan NQ17

the members' faces. Each performer carried a bunch of peppermint (ca'xkuxke); at the sound of the special song a motion was made with this peppermint as though to remove the paint. Then the paint was actually rubbed off with the end of the robe. When the dance was all over, the women lay down to sleep in the lodge. Some members fasted all night. Before dawn one of the musicians took a long cottonwood pole and attached all the headdresses and the middle officer's robe to it. The staff was then fixed above the doorway. This was a sign for a big wind and snow to drive the buffalo close to the village. At the foot of the pole a buffalo skull was deposited. A branch of a tree was painted red, and numerous offerings were tied to it and laid on the skull. Thereupon all the members rose, went out of the lodge, and passed through the village. They approached the lodge in exactly the same way as on the previous day, making four stops and dancing at each before reëntering the dance-lodge. During the day one of the officers prepared all the food required. In the evening the performance was repeated, the three officers dancing up to the buffalo skull, whereupon the entire society followed suit. In front of the skull they placed a ball of mashed corn and a pipe. The leader took the pipe and the corn-ball. First she offered the pipe to the musicians, who lit and smoked it. Then she distributed the corn among the members, beginning with the one nearest to herself and appropriating what remained in the end. Next, the rear officer distributed corn twice, and finally the middle officer made two distributions. The entire society represented a buffalo herd; the middle officer represented the best buffalo and was supposed to get all that remained of the corn. The second, third, and fourth nights were all similar so far as the feature just described was concerned. Throughout the performance there were numerous spectators.

For the last night each member had to prepare a basketful of mashed corn; sometimes this was attended to by the members' mothers. Additional food was also brought together. This night was distinguished by the use of gourd rattles. All the baskets of corn, as well as the robes and headdresses were placed round the skull. Next a song was sung four times, and incense was burned to smoke the robes. Then mashed corn was given to the spectators until the supply was exhausted. Some peppermint was tied to a short pole. The incense-burner dipped it into a dish of water, and sprinkled all the members beginning with the leader and stopping with the rear officer. The buffalo skull and the musicians were also sprinkled. A little of the food was attached to the end of a short stick and placed in the nasal cavities of the skull, then pointed to the four quarters, and finally set down on the fireplace. A feast terminated the performance. On this last night newly adopted members made valuable presents to their adoptive mothers.

4: Lowie E-5 (1910-1911) 1913
NQ17 Mandan NQ17
Hidatsa NQ14

MH 575 17 MH 575 561

In Calf-woman's day[1] the number of Mandan and of Hidatsa women in the society was about equal. The performances ceased, under Government pressure, when she was about fourteen years of age.

Hides-and-eats, who had served as rear officer, added a number of details. It was necessary to join in the wintertime because that was the season of the dance. The person who called for the performance of the great ceremony must have dreamt to that effect and was expected to prepare a great deal of food for the society. If, during the dance, a member went outside from necessity and a young man pulled her blanket, she was obliged to say, "A wolf has bitten me." If she failed to say this, she was in danger of actually being bitten by a wolf. The members were middle-aged, while the two women with skunkskin head bands were elderly. Hides-and-eats set the number of singers at four; their age was immaterial, but as a matter of fact they were about fifty or sixty. They were not identical with the musicians of other women's societies.

[788]

MH 575 527 [688]

Buffalo-bird-woman says that the White Buffalo women were in the habit of going round the village in the morning, passing every lodge. One member would enter a clan daughter's lodge, and say to her, "So-and-so's daughter, give me light" (that is, fire). The clan daughter sometimes answered, and sometimes remained silent. Once the informant's aunt addressed her as stated above, and she replied, "Yes, I will do so." This signified her willingness to provide a feast. The next day, accordingly, she brought large quantities of food, invited all the White Buffalo women to her lodge, and entertained them. Further, she gave the society a new gun as a present, and a piece of calico to be smoked with incense. The incense-burner, who also had the privilege of taking off all the members' robes and hanging them up, took charcoal, made incense, seized the head of the rear officer's robe, shook it, proceeded to the middle officer's,[2] and repeated the same performance, as she finally did with the leader also. She made incense as she passed along the circle of members. Then the dance began. All wore their crowns of white buffalo skin on this occasion. When the singers commenced to sing, the leader and the rear officer rose and danced forward, crossing each other's path. They returned to their places, and repeated the performance at the next two songs. At the fourth song, the middle officer also rose, and all three danced, facing alternately the fireplace and the door, and finally returning to their places. At the following song everyone rose and danced. After the dance was over, the little girl approached the rear officer with a corn-ball, and put a little of the corn

[535]

[1] This informant is about 58 years old (1910).
[2] This informant, like Hides-and-eats, speaks of but one little girl in the society.

6: Wied-Neuwied T-5 (1832-1834) 1843 NQ17 Mandan NQ17

515 which arises from their continual and severe labour. They generally let their nails grow long.

The rude inhabitants of the prairies are extremely agile and hardy; they bathe, in the depth of winter, in the half frozen rivers, and wear no covering on the upper part of their body under the buffalo robe; they are very expert swimmers, even when quite young. I have already 481 observed that all these nations swim in the same manner as the Brazilian Tapuyas, which is confirmed by other writers. They often practise riding on horseback without a saddle, and very swift horse-racing. They are capital marksmen with the bow; all their senses are remarkably acute.

561 Among the Mandans, and all the nations of the Upper Missouri, as well as among most of the North American tribes, there are certain bands or unions or companies, which are dis- 425 tinguished from the others, and kept together by certain external badges and laws. They have three kinds of war or signal pipes, which are hung round the neck, and are among the badges of the unions, which divide the men into six classes, according to their age. The first band or union is composed of "the foolish dogs," or "the dogs whose name is not known." They are young people from ten to fifteen years of age, and wear a pipe made of the wing bone of the wild goose, which is but small. When they dance, three of them have a long broad piece of red cloth hanging from the back of the neck to the ground. Like every distinct class they have a particular song to accompany their dance. Formerly old people likewise belonged to this band, but then they never dared to retreat before the enemy; this has since been changed to the present limited rule. If a boy desires to enter the first band in order to become a man, he goes to a member of it, addresses him by the appellation of father, and endeavours to purchase the rank, the dance, the song, and the war pipe belonging to it, for certain articles of value, such as blankets, cloth, horses, powder, ball, and the like, which the father pays for him. If this place is sold to him he has a right to all the distinctions and privileges of the band, and he who sold it thereby renounces all claim to it, and endeavours to purchase admission to a higher band. The dances of the several classes are in the main very similar, but there is a particular 561 song belonging to each, and sometimes even a different step. The drum and schischikué must 535 likewise be purchased at the same time. The latter, among this band, is spherical, with a handle, 534 and is made of leather.

561 The second class or band is that of the crows or ravens; it consists of young men from twenty to twenty-five years of age. Frequently young people are in none of the bands for half a year or more. They then go to the band of the crows, and say, "Father, I am poor, but I wish [534] to purchase from you." If the possessor agrees, they then receive the raven's feathers, which the band wear on their heads, a double war-pipe, consisting of two wing bones of a goose joined together, a drum, schischikué, the song and the dance. Each of these bands has a leader, called,

6: Wied-Neuwied T-5 (1832-1834) 1843 NQ17 Mandan NQ17

There are other dances which are bought and sold, among which are a second dance of the third band, and the dance of the half-shorn heads, which the lower class may buy before they are old enough to belong to the third band.

The medicine feast, the insignia, and the dance belonging to the half-shorn heads, will be described in the sequel. Another dance is that of the old dogs. The band of the dogs can buy it of the buffaloes before they can become buffaloes, or purchase their admission to the fifth band. In the dance of the old dogs they paint themselves white, the hands red and black, and wear a girdle of the skin of the grizzly bear, and a bunch of feathers hanging down at the back of the head.

What is called the hot dance is now danced at Ruhptare, and by the Manitaries, who bought it from the Arikkaras. It is executed by the little dogs, whose name is not known. A large fire is kindled on the occasion, and a quantity of live coals is scattered on the ground, about which the young men dance, quite naked and barefooted. The hands, with the lower part of the arms, and the feet and ankles, are painted red. A kettle, with meat cut in small pieces, is hung over the fire; and when the meat is done they plunge their hands into the boiling water, take out the meat, and eat it, at the risk of scalding themselves. The last comers are the worst off, having to dip their hands the deepest into the boiling water. During the dance they have in their hands their weapons and the schischikué.

There is another dance which will be described in one of the following chapters. The dance is accompanied with the schischikué and drum, and is generally performed in a circle: the dancers carry in their hands the bow-lance,* which is adorned with feathers and bears' entrails.

The Mandan women are divided precisely in the same manner as the men, into four classes, according to their age. The youngest band is called "the band of the gun." They wear in their hair some down feathers of the eagle, and have their peculiar dance.

The next class into which they obtain admission by purchase is "the river class." When they dance they wear an eagle's feather, fastened to the fore part of the head with a piece of white ribbon, which projects on the left side, and is entwined round the quill with grass.

The third class consists of the women of the hay, who, when they dance, put on their best clothes, and sing the scalp song.

The fourth and last class is the band of the white cow. They paint one eye with some colour according to their taste, generally sky-blue. On the chin, this class, mostly consisting of aged women, tattoo themselves with black lines; round their heads they wear a broad piece of the skin of a white buffalo cow, something like a hussar's cap, with a tuft of feathers in it. A more

* The bow-lance is a large bow, to one end of which the iron point of a lance is fastened. It serves only for show, and is never used in serious combat. It is very handsomely adorned with eagle's feathers, frequently with red cloth also, and, when completely decorated, is worth from 100 to 250 florins. It descends from father to son, and cannot be obtained except at a high price. Sometimes a horse or more must be given for it.

1 [i.e., in addition to the dances the purchase of which acquires membership in an age-grade society. See category 561.--Analyst]

6: Wied-Neuwied T-5 (1832-1834) 1843 NQ17 Mandan NQ17

721 727 the prisoners ere they can reach the village, and kill them; this is especially an act of revenge for their husbands or sons who may have fallen in the battle.

721 555 When a young man desires to become a leader, or partisan, he first gains, by gifts, the favour of the other young men, and then dedicates a medicine pipe, which is a plain, unornamented tube. This ceremony is accomplished by a four days' fast, and supplications for assistance to the lord of life, the first man, &c. &c., and other supernatural beings. He then addresses the young men, and calls upon them to give him their support in his undertakings. If a sufficient number testify their readiness to accompany him in a warlike expedition, and such an expedition is determined upon, they dance and feast in the medicine lodge for several successive nights, from whence, too, they generally march off by night. The women never accompany these expeditions. On setting out the men are badly clothed, and not painted. They do not depart in a body, but, for the most part, singly, or in small detatched parties. At a certain distance from the village they halt upon an isolated hill, open their medicine bags, and, after the men have sat down in a [787] circle, the partisan produces his medicine pipe, which all present smoke; the person who smokes last, then spreads his medicines on the ground, or hangs them up, and from them foretels the fate of the expedition. The Indians manifest much gravity and decorum on solemn occasions like these.

727 535 When the warriors return from their expedition, the scalps are carried on in advance, on high poles: if they have performed any exploits, they paint their faces black; very frequently the whole body is thus disfigured. The women and children go out to meet them, and they enter the village performing the scalp dance. This dance is then repeated four successive nights in the medicine lodge, and is subsequently danced in the open space, in the centre of the village. If the campaign took place in the spring, it is danced, at intervals, till the fall of the leaf in autumn; if in the autumn, it is danced till spring, but should any of the nation be killed in the interim all festivities immediately cease. In the scalp dance the Indians paint themselves in various ways, form a semicircle, advance, and retreat amid the din of singing, the beating of the drum and schischikué. The wives of those men who have obtained the scalps carry them on long rods.

555 All the distinguished deeds performed by a war party are placed to the account of the partisan. All the scalps that are taken belong to him, and also the horses that they have captured. He who has killed an enemy is a brave man, and reckons one exploit; but the partisan rises the highest on that account, even though he had not seen any of the enemies who have been slain. When he returns home, the old men and women meet, and sing the scalp song, on which he must make them all presents of value. He gives away all the captured horses, and valuable articles, and is afterwards a poor man, but his reputation is great. Successful partisans afterwards become chiefs, and are highly respected by their nation. The Indian youths go to war when they are only fourteen or fifteen years of age. Sometimes they make excursions on horseback in the winter.

7: Catlin R, E-5 (1832-1840) 1857
NQ17 Mandan NQ17

folded up for a pillow, and others drawn over them instead of blankets. These beds, as far as I have seen them (and I have visited almost every lodge in the village), are uniformly screened with a covering of buffalo or elk skins, oftentimes beautifully dressed and placed over the upright poles or frame, like a suit of curtains; leaving a hole in front, sufficiently spacious for the occupant to pass in and out, to and from his or her bed. Some of these coverings or curtains are exceedingly beautiful, being cut tastefully into fringe, and handsomely ornamented with porcupine's quills and picture writings or hieroglyphics.

From the great number of inmates in these lodges, they are necessarily very spacious, and the number of beds considerable. It is no uncommon thing to see these lodges fifty feet in diameter inside (which is an immense room), with a row of these curtained beds extending quite around their sides, being some ten or twelve of them, placed four or five feet apart, and the space between them occupied by a large post, fixed quite firm in the ground, and six or seven feet high, with large wooden pegs or bolts in it, on which are hung and grouped, with a wild and startling taste, the arms and armour of the respective proprietor; consisting of his whitened shield, embossed and emblazoned with the figure of his protecting *medicine* (or mystery), his bow and quiver, his war-club or battle-axe, his dart or javelin—his tobacco pouch and pipe—his medicine-bag—and his eagle—ermine or raven head-dress; and over all, and on the top of the post (as if placed by some conjuror or Indian magician, to guard and protect the spell of wildness that reigns in this strange place), stands forth and in full relief the head and horns of a buffalo, which is, by a village regulation, owned and possessed by every man in the nation, and hung at the head of his bed, which he uses as a mask when called upon by the chiefs, to join in the buffalo-dance, of which I shall say more in a future epistle

This arrangement of beds, of arms, &c., combining the most vivid display and arrangement of colours, of furs, of trinkets—of barbed and glistening points and steel—of mysteries and hocus pocus, together with the sombre and smoked colour of the roof and sides of the lodge; and the wild, and rude and red—the graceful (though uncivil) conversational, garrulous, story-telling and happy, though ignorant and untutored groups, that are smoking their pipes—wooing their sweethearts, and embracing their little ones about their peaceful and endeared fire-sides; together with their pots and kettles, spoons, and other culinary articles of their own manufacture, around them; present altogether, one of the most picturesque scenes to the eye of a stranger, that can be possibly seen; and far more wild and vivid than could ever be imagined.

Reader, I said these people were garrulous, story-telling and happy; this is true, and literally so; and it belongs to me to establish the fact, and correct the error which seems to have gone forth to the world on this subject.

As I have before observed, there is no subject that I know of within the

7: Catlin R, E-5 (1832-1840) 1857
NQ17 Mandan NQ17

LETTER—No. 18.

MANDAN VILLAGE, UPPER MISSOURI.

461 535 THE Mandans, like all other tribes, lead lives of idleness and leisure; and of course, devote a great deal of time to their sports and amusements, of which they have a great variety. Of these, dancing is one of the principal, and may be seen in a variety of forms: such as the buffalo dance, the boasting dance, the begging dance, the scalp dance, and a dozen other kinds of dances, all of which have their peculiar characters and meanings or objects.

535 533 198 These exercises are exceedingly grotesque in their appearance, and to the eye of a traveller who knows not their meaning or importance, they are an uncouth and frightful display of starts, and jumps, and yelps, and jarring gutturals, which are sometimes truly terrifying. But when one gives them a little attention, and has been lucky enough to be initiated into their mysterious meaning, they become a subject of the most intense and exciting interest. Every dance has its peculiar step, and every step has its meaning; every dance also has its peculiar song, and that is so intricate and mysterious oftentimes, that not one in ten of the young men who are dancing and singing it, know the meaning of the song which they are chanting over. None but the medicine-men are allowed to understand them; and even they are generally only initiated into these secret arcana, on the payment of a liberal stipend for their tuition, which requires much application and study. There is evidently a set song and sentiment for every dance, for the songs are perfectly measured, and sung in exact time with the beat of the drum; and always with an uniform and invariable set of sounds and expressions, which clearly indicate certain sentiments, which are expressed by the voice, though sometimes not given in any known language whatever.

They have other dances and songs which are not so mystified, but which are sung and understood by every person in the tribe, being sung in their own language, with much poetry in them, and perfectly metred, but without rhyme. On these subjects I shall take another occasion to say more; and will for the present turn your attention to the style and modes in which some of these curious transactions are conducted.

535 MY ears have been almost continually ringing since I came here, with the din of yelping and beating of the drums; but I have for several days

7: Catlin R, E-5 (1832-1840) 1857
NQ17 Mandan NQ17

past been peculiarly engrossed, and my senses almost confounded with the stamping, and grunting, and bellowing of the *buffalo dance*, which closed a few days since at sunrise (thank Heaven), and which I must needs describe to you. 535 ●

Buffaloes, it is known, are a sort of roaming creatures, congregating occasionally in huge masses, and strolling away about the country from east to west, or from north to south, or just where their whims or strange fancies may lead them; and the Mandans are sometimes, by this means, most unceremoniously left without any thing to eat; and being a small tribe, and unwilling to risk their lives by going far from home in the face of their more powerful enemies, are oftentimes left almost in a state of starvation. In any emergency of this kind, every man musters and brings out of his lodge his mask (the skin of a buffalo's head with the horns on), which he is obliged to keep in readiness for this occasion; and then commences the buffalo dance, of which I have above spoken, which is held for the purpose of making "buffalo come" (as they term it), of inducing the buffalo herds to change the direction of their wanderings, and bend their course towards the Mandan village, and graze about on the beautiful hills and bluffs in its vicinity, where the Mandans can shoot them down and cook them as they want them for food.

For the most part of the year, the young warriors and hunters, by riding out a mile or two from the village, can kill meat in abundance; and sometimes large herds of these animals may be seen grazing in full view of the village. There are other seasons also when the young men have ranged about the country as far as they are willing to risk their lives, on account of their enemies, without finding meat. This sad intelligence is brought back to the chiefs and doctors, who sit in solemn council, and consult on the most expedient measures to be taken, until they are sure to decide upon the old and only expedient which "never has failed." 535 224

The chief issues his order to his runners or criers, who proclaim it through the village—and in a few minutes the dance begins. The place where this strange operation is carried on is in the public area in the centre of the village, and in front of the great medicine or mystery lodge. About ten or fifteen Mandans at a time join in the dance, each one with the skin of the buffalo's head (or mask) with the horns on, placed over his head, and in his hand his favourite bow or lance, with which he is used to slay the buffalo. 535

I mentioned that this dance always had the desired effect, that it never fails, nor can it, for it cannot be stopped (but is going incessantly day and night) until "buffalo come." Drums are beating and rattles are shaken, and songs and yells incessantly are shouted, and lookers-on stand ready with masks on their heads, and weapons in hand, to take the place of each one as he becomes fatigued, and jumps out of the ring.

During this time of general excitement, spies or "*lookers*" are kept on the

7: Catlin R, E-5 (1832-1840) 1857
NQ17 Mandan NQ17

535 hills in the neighbourhood of the village, who, when they discover buffaloes in sight, give the appropriate signal, by "throwing their robes," which is instantly seen in the village, and understood by the whole tribe. At this joyful intelligence there is a shout of thanks to the Great Spirit, and more especially to the mystery-man, and the dancers, who *have been the immediate cause of their success!* There is then a brisk preparation for the chase—a grand hunt takes place. The choicest pieces of the victims are sacrificed to the Great Spirit, and then a surfeit and a carouse.

These dances have sometimes been continued in this village two and three weeks without stopping an instant, until the joyful moment when buffaloes made their appearance. So they *never fail*; and they think they have been the means of bringing them in.

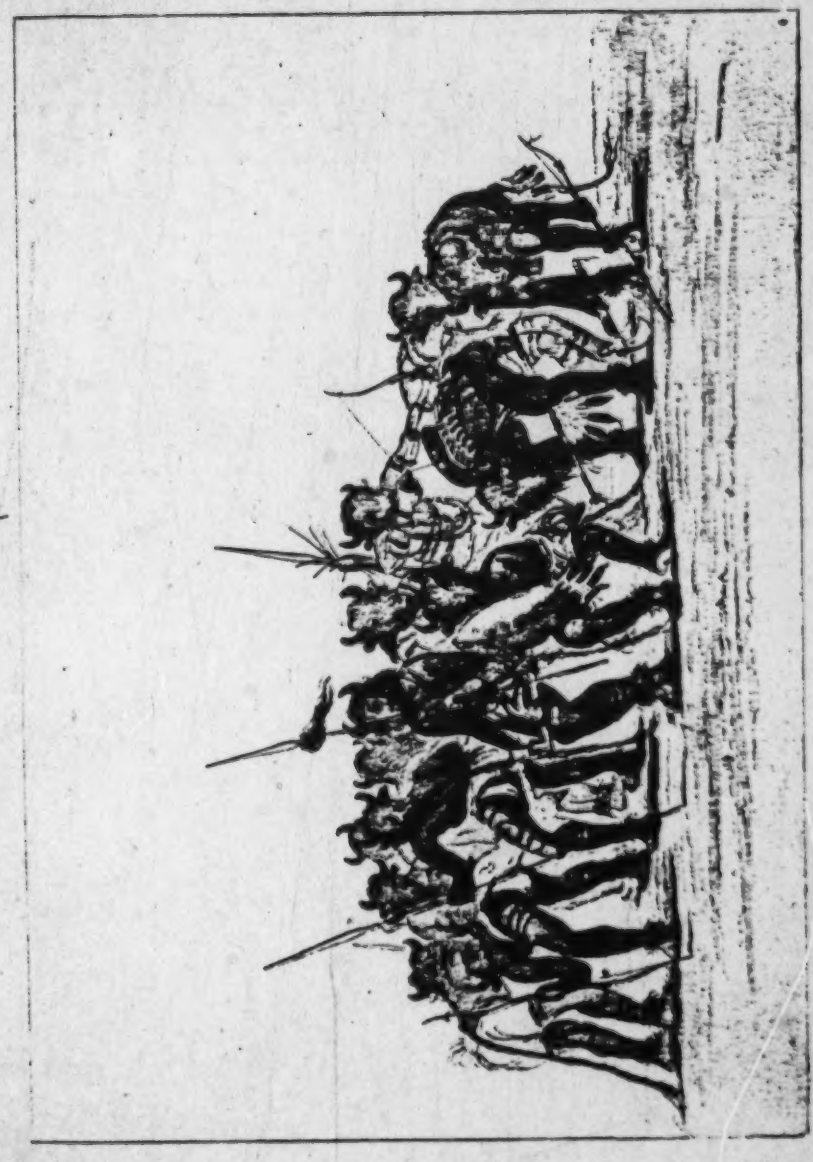
Every man in the Mandan village (as I have before said) is obliged by a village regulation, to keep the mask of the buffalo, hanging on a post at the head of his bed, which he can use on his head whenever he is called upon by the chiefs, to dance for the coming of buffaloes. The mask is put over the head, and generally has a strip of the skin hanging to it, of the whole length of the animal, with the tail attached to it, which, passing down over the back of the dancer, is dragging on the ground (PLATE 56). When one becomes fatigued of the exercise, he signifies it by bending quite forward, and sinking his body towards the ground; when another draws a bow upon him and hits him with a blunt arrow, and he falls like a buffalo—is seized by the bye-standers, who drag him out of the ring by the heels, brandishing their knives about him; and having gone through the motions of skinning and cutting him up, they let him off, and his place is at once supplied by another, who dances into the ring with his mask on; and by this taking of places, the scene is easily kept up night and day, until the desired effect has been produced, that of "making buffalo come."

The day before yesterday however, readers, which, though it commenced in joy and thanksgiving to the Great Spirit for the signal success which had attended their several days of dancing and supplication, ended in a calamity which threw the village of the Mandans into mourning and repentant tears, and that at a time of scarcity and great distress. The signal was given into the village on that morning from the top of a distant bluff, that a band of buffaloes were in sight, though at a considerable distance off, and every heart beat with joy, and every eye watered and glistened with gladness.

224 The dance had lasted some three or four days, and now, instead of the doleful tap of the drum and the begging chaunts of the dancers, the stamping of horses was heard as they were led and galloped through the village—young men were throwing off their robes and their shirts,—were seen snatching a handful of arrows from their quivers, and stringing their sinewy bows, glancing their eyes and their smiles at their sweethearts, and mounting their ponies. * * * *

* * A few minutes there had been of bustle and

7: Catlin R, E-5 (1832-1840) 1857
NQ17 Mandan NQ17



535

[facing p. 128]

7: Catlin R, E-5 (1832-1840) 1857
NQ17 Mandan NQ17

796 421 *medicine*, and could not be sold for any consideration; so I abandoned all thoughts of obtaining anything, except what I have done by the *medicine* operation of my pencil, which was applied to everything, and even upon that they looked with decided distrust and apprehension, as a sort of theft or sacrilege.

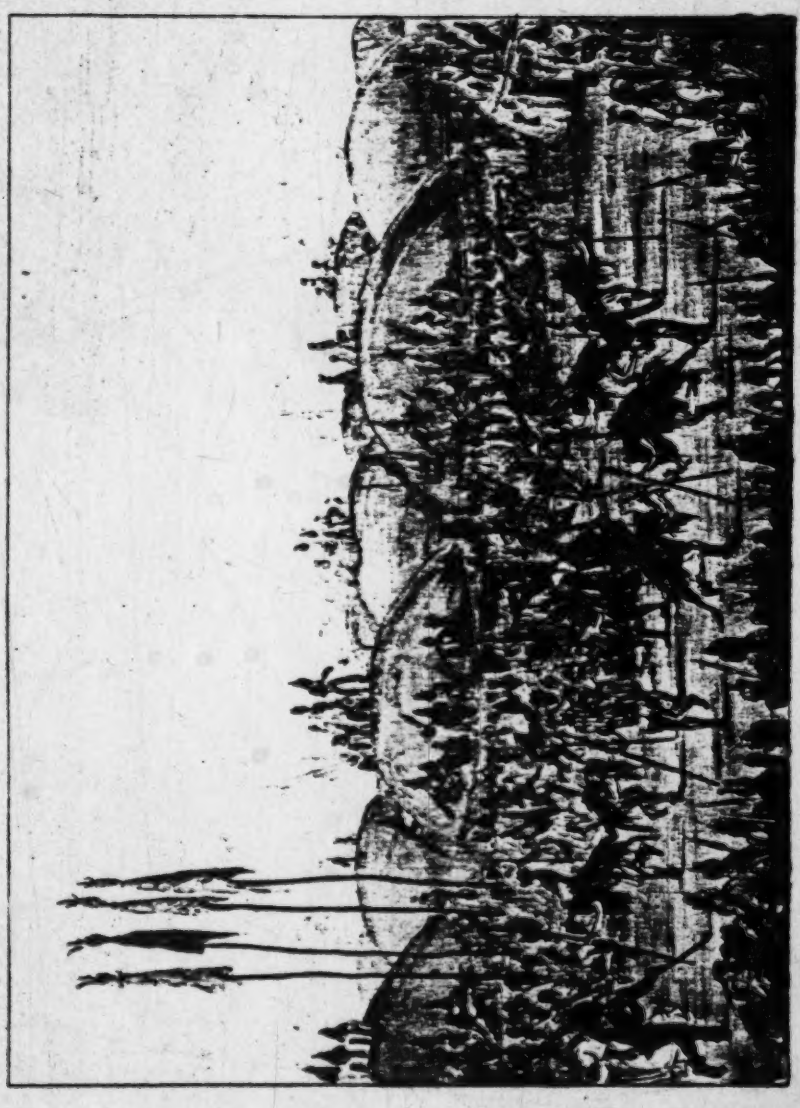
796 Such then was the group, and such the appearance of the interior of the medicine-lodge during the three first, and part of the fourth day also, of the Mandan religious ceremonies. The medicine-man with a group about him, of young aspirants who were under his sole controul, as was every article and implement to be used, and the sanctity of this solitary and gloomy looking place, which could not be trespassed upon by any man's presence without his most sovereign permission.

796 ●535 During the three first days of this solemn conclave, there were many very curious forms and amusements enacted in the open area in the middle of the village, and in front of the medicine-lodge, by other members of the community, one of which formed a material part or link of these strange ceremonials. This very curious and exceedingly grotesque part of their performance, which they denominated *Bel-lohck nah-pick* (the bull-dance) of which I have before spoken, as one of the avowed objects for which they held this annual fête; and to the strictest observance of which they attribute the coming of buffaloes to supply them with food during the season—is repeated four times during the first day, eight times on the second day, twelve times on the third day, and sixteen times on the fourth day; and always around the curb, or "*big canoe*," of which I have before spoken.

This subject I have selected for my second picture, and the principal actors in it were eight men, with the entire skins of buffaloes thrown over their backs, with the horns and hoofs and tails remaining on; their bodies in a horizontal position, enabling them to imitate the actions of the buffalo, whilst they were looking out of its eyes as through a mask (PLATE 67).

The bodies of these men were chiefly naked and all painted in the most extraordinary manner, with the nicest adherence to exact similarity; their limbs, bodies and faces, being in every part covered, either with black, red, or white paint. Each one of these strange characters had also a lock of buffalo's hair tied around his ancles—in his right hand a rattle, and a slender white rod or staff, six feet long, in the other; and carried on his back, a bunch of green willow boughs about the usual size of a bundle of straw. These eight men, being divided into four pairs, took their positions on the four different sides of the curb or big canoe, representing thereby the four cardinal points; and between each group of them, with the back turned to the big canoe, was another figure, engaged in the same dance, keeping step with them, with a similar staff or wand in one hand and a rattle in the other, and (being four in number) answering again to the four cardinal points. The bodies of these four young men were chiefly naked, with no other dress upon them than a beautiful kelt (or quarta-quaw), around the waist, made of eagles

7: Catlin R, E-5 (1832-1840) 1857
NQ17 Mandan NQ17



796
535

[facing p. 164]

7: Catlin R, E-5 (1832-1840) 1857
NQ17 Mandan NQ17

796
535

quills and ermine, and very splendid head-dresses made of the same materials. Two of these figures were painted entirely black with pounded charcoal and grease, whom they called the "firmament or night," and the numerous white spots which were dotted all over their bodies, they called "stars." The other two were painted from head to foot as red as vermilion could make them; these they said represented the day, and the white streaks which were painted up and down over their bodies, were "ghosts which the morning rays were chasing away."

These twelve are the only persons actually engaged in this strange dance, which is each time repeated in the same form, without the slightest variation. There are, however, a great number of characters engaged in giving the whole effect and wildness to this strange and laughable scene, each one acting well his part, and whose offices, strange and inexplicable as they are, I will endeavour to point out and explain as well as I can, from what I saw, elucidated by their own descriptions.

This most remarkable scene, then, which is witnessed more or less often on each day, takes place in presence of the whole nation, who are generally gathered around, on the tops of the wigwams or otherwise, as spectators, whilst the young men are reclining and fasting in the lodge as above described. On the first day, this "*bull-dance*" is given *once* to each of the cardinal points, and the medicine-man smokes his pipe in those directions. On the second day, *twice* to each; *three times* to each on the third day, and *four times* to each on the fourth. As a signal for the dancers and other characters (as well as the public) to assemble, the old man, master of ceremonies, with the medicine-pipe in hand, dances out of the lodge, singing (or rather crying) forth a most pitiful lament, until he approaches the big canoe, against which he leans, with the pipe in his hand, and continues to cry. At this instant, four very aged and patriarchal looking men, whose bodies are painted red, and who have been guarding the four sides of the lodge, enter it and bring out the four sacks of water, which they place near the big canoe, where they seat themselves by the side of them and commence thumping on them with the mallets or drumsticks which have been lying on them; and another brandishes and shakes the *eeh-na-dees* or rattles, and all unite to them their voices, raised to the highest pitch possible, as the music for the *bull-dance*, which is then commenced and continued for fifteen minutes or more in perfect time, and without cessation or intermission. When the music and dancing stop, which are always perfectly simultaneous, the whole nation raise the huzza! and a deafening shout of approbation; the master of ceremonies dances back to the medicine-lodge, and the old men return to their former place; the sacks of water, and all rest as before, until by the same method, they are again called into a similar action.

The supernumeraries or other characters who play their parts in this grand spectacle, are numerous and well worth description. By the side of the

7: Catlin R, E-5 (1832-1840) 1857
NQ17 Mandan NQ17

796 big canoe are seen two men with the skins of grizzly bears thrown over them, using the skins as a mask, over their heads. These ravenous animals 535 are continually growling and threatening to devour everything before them and interfering with the forms of their religious ceremony. To appease them, the women are continually bringing and placing before them dishes of meat, which are as often snatched up and carried to the prairie, by two men whose bodies are painted black and their heads white, whom they call bald eagles, who are darting by them and grasping their food from before them as they pass. These are again chased upon the plains by a hundred or more small boys, who are naked, with their bodies painted yellow and their heads white, whom they call *Cabris* or antelopes; who at length get the food away from them and devour it; thereby inculcating (perhaps) the beautiful moral, that by the dispensations of Providence, his bountiful gifts will fall at last to the hands of the innocent.

During the intervals between these dances, all these characters, except those from the medicine-lodge, retire to a wigwam close by, which they use on the occasion also as a sacred place, being occupied exclusively by them while they are at rest, and also for the purpose of painting and ornamenting their bodies for the occasion.

During each and every one of these dances, the old men who beat upon the sacks and sing, are earnestly chanting forth their supplications to the Great Spirit, for the continuation of his influence in sending them buffaloes to supply them with food during the year; they are administering courage and fortitude to the young men in the lodge, by telling them, that "the Great Spirit has opened his ears in their behalf—that the very atmosphere all about them is peace—that their women and children can hold the mouth of the grizzly bear—that they have invoked from day to day O-ke-hee-de (the Evil Spirit)—that they are still challenging him to come, and yet he has not dared to make his appearance!"

796 But alas! in the last of these dances, on the fourth day, in the midst of all their mirth and joy, and about noon, and in the height of all these exultations, an instant scream burst forth from the tops of the lodges!—men, women, dogs and all, seemed actually to howl and shudder with alarm, as they fixed their glaring eye-balls upon the prairie bluff, about a mile in the west, down the side of which a man was seen descending at full speed towards the village! This strange character darted about in a zig-zag course in all directions on the prairie, like a boy in pursuit of a butterfly, until he approached the piquets of the village, when it was discovered that his body was entirely naked, and painted as black as a negro, with pounded charcoal and bear's grease; his body was therefore everywhere of a shining black, except occasionally white rings of an inch or more in diameter, which were marked here and there all over him; and frightful indentures of white around his mouth, resembling canine teeth. Added to his hideous appearance, he gave the most frightful shrieks and screams as he dashed through the village

9:Bruner E-5 (1951-1953) 1956
NQ17 Mandan NQ17

participate in that historically mixed but contemporary functioning Indian culture.

CRITERIA OF ACCULTURATION

There are many superficial criteria that could be selected to divide the population of Lone Hill into groups differing in degree of acculturation, but I prefer one that has an essential connection to the Indian value system. One well-known basic value that contrasts sharply with our general American ethic is the Indian value of generosity (Bruner 1953:23–24). This value difference has a readily observable behavioral manifestation—participation in the Indian ceremonial dances. The Indian "give-away" dance is now a secular affair, featuring Indian songs and dances and the giving of war bonnets, horses, cattle, blankets, and money as gifts to prescribed relatives, distinguished visitors, societies, and the needy. It is one of the few remaining public gatherings in Lone Hill where generosity and other Indian values are expressed, reaffirmed and maintained. The following statement by an informant aptly characterizes the emotional overtones of the dance (quoted in Merrill 1951:27):

> After the people get all painted up—this is decoration, like lipstick—and the tom-toms get going and people chanting and singing (demonstrated with a rapid beat of his feet and an ai-ai-ai chant), people get all worked up and excited. Then someone gets up and makes a speech and gives away a horse, or a beef, or two beefs, and everyone gets going and there's a lot of giving-away and many people end up with little or nothing. . . . They say that property doesn't mean anything; what counts is being friendly and generous and all friends of one another. . . . People shout and praise a person (who gives away a lot) and they talk about it long afterwards.

Not every person in Lone Hill attends the dance. Some families come with all their children, stay throughout the night, and donate generously. For them the dance is an impressive and public mechanism of socialization to Indian ways. Others virtually never attend the ceremonials, as they are more concerned with the accumulation than the giving of goods. As a result, they and their children do not participate in the one public ritual that best symbolizes and makes legitimate the traditional Indian values. One acculturated Indian man had this to say about the ceremonials:

> I never go to any dances or pow-wows. These dances are the fellows breeding grounds; they go there to drink, to raise hell, and they are not Christians. A lot of these fellows . . . go there to take some gal out . . . and get her drunk. That's all these dances are for, as far as the younger people are concerned. The older people go there to get these donations; something for nothing. . . . They take their kids there and the kids don't learn much from that. They give things away and that money can be used to educate their children, buy provisions and things. It seems like with an Indian they think they are in the spotlight; it makes them feel good. I never believed in it simply because I know most families and they can't afford to do that.

Participation in the Indian ceremonials was applied to the population of Lone Hill as a criterion of acculturation. In order to define the population, it was first necessary to delimit the community, the sample, and the unit of